

The COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XLVII February 20, 1948 NUMBER 19

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THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the *Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index and Catholic Bookman*. Founded by the Calvert Associates, Inc., in 1924 with Michael Williams as President and Editor.

Published weekly and copyrighted 1948 in the U.S.A. by The Commonwealth Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. MURRAY HILL 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. U.S. and Canada \$6 a year. Foreign \$7. Single copies 15c

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The Pope and Nuclear Fission

ALTHOUGH THE TEXT so far released has been fragmentary in the extreme, the Pope's speech of February 8th, calling for the outlawing of atomic energy for warlike purposes, has emphasized two extremely important points. The first is the Papal insistence on the "noble conception" of the harnessing of atomic energy itself. The Pope's positive, almost optimistic attitude towards nuclear science is quite explicitly stated: this "admirable conquest of the human intellect which taxes and investigates the laws of nature, is carrying humanity with it along new roads." Man, through great efforts, has finally "succeeded in reaching the deepest knowledge" of the laws regarding the formation and disintegration of the atom. His Holiness is curiously free from the pessimism with which the Wright brothers, and Professor Einstein himself, regard their discoveries, seeing them as inevitably Frankensteins.

On the contrary, His Holiness emphasizes the fundamental Christian belief that whatever is, is good, however evil may be the use made of it, or the ends to which it is misdirected. And

amongst the creatures that are good, and must be discovered as such, is not only energy, but man himself. "In the trusting hope", the Pope dares to say, at this moment in time, "that it [atomic energy] will be used solely for the work of peace, one must regard it as an investigation truly of genius, of those laws of nature which regulate the intimate essence and activity of organic matter."

The Pope's second point is the unique responsibility of Man for his inventions as for his actions. He uttered the gravest warnings as to what would happen if the use of atomic energy were not outlawed in war.

Humanly speaking, how unrealistic, how absurd, how utterly ridiculous the Papal pronouncement seems! After two world wars that have disintegrated civilization completely, when we are already in a "cold war" that is in graver danger of spontaneous combustion than ever was the damp-est hayrick, the Pope, in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, discusses "the immutability of the natural laws, and the supreme government of God in the world." Yet how tremendously heartening and exciting it is that the Church, at this particularly dismal moment should thus reaffirm her faith and her hope, not only in God, but in Man, and should encourage and bless scientific investigation and experiment! To many it will seem a curious revolution by which today the Church is encouraging and blessing the Galileos when they are doubting themselves; to others it will be just another example of "... dum volvitur orbis." When Renaissance man, drunk with new wine, arrogantly cried too loud, "what a noble work is man," the Church gently chided "this quintessence of dust"; now that man is choked and sickened by the stench of the unholy mess he has made, the Pope, echoing gently "how beauteous mankind is," speaks of the "noble conception," that so far has only proved itself at Hiroshima, and he expresses the hope "that atomic energy would give to the progress of civilization its rich resources of energy."

Wheat and Chaff

THE reluctance of economic experts to make a clear statement about a clear economic phenomenon like the break in wheat prices encourages a vulgar disrespect for expertness and threatens to increase contempt for reason and intelligence altogether as an instrument of public policy. Reason should insist upon making one obvious point: that the market, that the national economy are complicated institutions created by objective factors and by personal psychological feelings, thoughts and choices which are infinitely less simplified than the slogans of political parties and of economic partisans.

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In public argument, inflation has gradually grown to mean high prices—a partial view, certainly, but if understood all around the same way, useful enough. But in such narrow terms, inflation-deflation should not be identified with prosperity-depression. That distinction must be made in general, in reference to the national economy, no less than privately, regarding our personal sense of economic well-being. Privately, we do make the distinction quite naturally. People like the aspects of inflation that spiral their own income, which is one of the difficulties. "Because the people enjoy the intoxication of high activity, high wages, high profits, which are the first effects of inflation."

But wheat took a deep plunge, and people wonder if the general price level will go off, and if so, how fast, and what will happen to levels of wages, profits, employment and all the rest? What was the cause for the price rise which included the skyrocketing of wheat? There is no agreement on that subject, which is rather strange in a scientific world. We suspect people and experts aren't trying to be scientific because their interests are at stake and partisanship aroused.

Labor economists lead two principal, opposing schools of analysis. The CIO lays the blame for inflation upon businessmen's greed for profits. The *Economic Outlook*, published by the CIO in December, states that the profits publicized by companies are given as percent of sales, and so are low. It claims that profits presented as a percentage of value added by the company, or as a percentage of the net worth of the company, would appear very great.

The pertinent question is why business is going to such great lengths to hide its great success. Business has good reason to conceal this success—a success made possible by an NAM engineered inflation. If the true profit picture is made known to the American people, there will no longer be any doubt in their minds as to who is responsible for the inflation. . . . When did this vicious spiral get started? It started with the killing of OPA in June of 1946. At that time there were no increases in labor or overhead costs; profits had maintained their war-time peak levels. There was no excuse for price increases except greed. Prices shot up and led to the highest profits of all time and a lower standard of living for most Americans.

This is the blunt fighting doctrine of the CIO on current inflation. It is linked, or confused, with the doctrine on prosperity-depression: that depression is caused by a maladjustment between wages, prices and profits. This latter theory calls for a definition of *proper* balance between wages, prices and profits, which has not yet been forthcoming. But understood in a complex enough fashion, it is hardly contestable, although the CIO does not bother to elaborate the understanding.

The AFL *Labor's Monthly Survey* for January is devoted to the money supply theory, which

flatly and persuasively contradicts the CIO:

The root cause of today's continuing price rise is the inflation of money. Money supply in USA was enormously expanded to finance the war; but *even after the war* it has gone on increasing at a rate out of all proportion to production of goods. That is the main reason why prices keep rising now, two years after V-J Day. . . . Today the total supply of money is three times that of 1939 (up 200%), while the supply of goods to be bought with money is only 71% higher. . . . The upward pressure of the huge money supply has been so great that prices were breaking through ceilings and black markets were appearing long before OPA expired. This was to be expected. Price control cannot dam an ever-growing flood of money inflation. We must attack the root cause of inflation, the excess money supply.

The AFL wants the Federal Reserve System to contract money supplies, even if the Government has to pay higher interest on its enormous debt. It wants individuals "to buy no more than you have to, to save all you can and invest in US Savings Bonds, etc., etc."

The break in wheat is an economic turn. Wheat was leading the farm commodities which were leading prices up near to the level of the inflation of money. It seems likely now that the problem is to avoid a 1921-type deflation and recession. Are farm prices working back nearer their pre-war relation to other prices, or are they going to set off a general, sickening fall? There is no need for the polemicists to fight each other about it. The situation is complicated. A wise and gentle handling of money can help, and also a just and prudent balancing of wages, prices and profits. Denying the value of either operation makes economic trouble, and very bad tempers—if these two can be separated in so obscurely moving and interacting a world economy.

Toward Federation

THE PLAN for Federated Europe, a United States of Europe, started off as a theory—that was before the war when Briand was talking—and it got nowhere. On the political plane, the nations of Europe were jealous of their independent and inalienable right to remain disunited until Germany overran them one after another; on the economic plane, every country, as Madariaga once remarked, has a South—both within it and without. Thus, within Spain, the prosperous Catalans did not want to be bothered with the bare El Greco landscapes, wind swept, of Castile; within Italy, Turin and Milan disliked paying taxes for Catanzaro, or even for Naples: within France, meridionalers were worth at most their climate. And there was a South also outside the nations. The British considered that the Orient began at Calais; the French and the Germans, when they crossed the Alps. Disdain, and the natural desire of the rich not to unite with

the poor, made Federation impossible.

But now the rich and the poor find a lesser gap between them; now in the enduring, spreading winter of the European world there is less to distinguish any North from any South. And since no nation in Europe can be proud, powerful and foolish alone, either economically or politically, with the wisdom of the bruised and hungry, the nations of Europe now are seeking some possibility of self-esteem, some hope of relative power, through the one mechanism—a real, consented and operating federation—that can provide them.

Mr. Churchill took his stand long ago and, this week, Mr. Bevin in his turn has spoken for a union of the West. This week also M. Bidault announces that France is working for a union with Italy which will go far beyond a mere customs union since it will necessitate planned finances and currency, planned production, planned exports and joint imports for the two countries. The Benelux trio have already taken the steps that are known.

Mr. Hector McNeill says that "perhaps we have started on the road of Pan-Europeanism by consent. . . . In this case the Continent will be greater than she has ever been in the past." That is the truth. And of course there is still the same obstacle which has prevented all progress in the past. Germany. There can be no pan-Europeanism unless Germany is integrated into Europe. The problem of how to effect this integration is still not faced. It is doubtful that it can be faced unless America, abandoning isolationism forever, offers the new Europe a permanent pact of association.

The President and Civil Rights

THREE months ago, when the President's committee of fifteen issued their comprehensive 175-page survey on the state of civil rights throughout the country, we wondered whether anything would be done about it. We are still wondering. Mr. Truman did, on February 2, brave the wrath of a number of his southern political supporters by asking Congress to enact a ten-point civil rights program based on the recommendations of his committee. He has moderated those recommendations considerably, particularly in the matter of restrictive covenants, but has outlined to Congress something genuinely substantial. So specific a presidential recommendation to the Congress will constitute a milestone in the direction of establishing basic rights to gainful employment and equality before the law to men of every race throughout the United States only if there is unrelenting public pressure to bring this legislation, and these equalities of opportunity, to pass. Thus far the general reaction has been lethargic. Only a brief flurry of protest from southern Democrats elected to Congress by a tiny minority of their constituents has ruffled the calm of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Even a friendly critic might point out that Mr. Truman's concern for the right to vote—the fourth of his ten points—might sound more convincing if he had insisted that things be thoroughly cleaned up in his own home district, where the ballot boxes for a fraudulent primary election in 1946 have with impunity been clean spirited away. With Mr. Truman, as with other national leaders who advocate social justice quite eloquently, such proposals might also carry more conviction if in the city of Washington itself conditions did not constitute so flagrant a violation of American ideals.

It is a mistake, of course, to believe that practices in the South are all that stand in the way of achieving nationwide civil rights for all. There is that little matter of the Japanese-Americans on our West Coast. And there are preeminently the racial antipathies, the job discrimination and restrictive covenants that obtain in all sections of the country. To set up adequate guarantees of civil rights for men of every race and station is clearly a nationwide responsibility.

Book Habits of the American

IT IS characteristic of our age that a breakdown of male sexual habits (and what a breakdown indeed!) should be an instant best-seller, whilst an exceedingly detailed breakdown of our reading habits should pass unnoticed. *Publishers Weekly* has recently been analyzing reading matter costs and trends, and has produced some highly interesting and informative figures. In spite of increases in paper costs of 45 percent and in printing costs of over 50 percent, there were over three thousand more books published in 1947 than in 1945, at an average cost of 15 percent per volume above 1946. Textbook sales were 60 percent above 1939 and college sales 255 percent above that year.

Of books consumed within the United States, fiction represented 21 percent of the whole, juveniles 10 percent and religion 7 percent. The top non-fiction for 1947, "Peace of Mind," outsold the top fiction, "Miracle of the Bells", by 30,000. Seventy-two percent of the sales of the 31 biggest publishers were to book sellers. Geographically, there are some big surprises. New York accounted for 22 percent of the total sales; Chicago came next, and Los Angeles closely after. Then Seattle, way ahead of Philadelphia!

The 20 top-ranking best sellers of 1947 cost their publishers an average cool twenty-two grand in initial advertising. People were most interested in personal affairs, psychology and housing; least interested in atomic energy or its implications.

A warning note is sounded in that "a book's price bears a much closer relationship to the weight, binding and paper content than to the extent and quality of its intellectual content."

The Occupying Powers

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn

I HAD TO THINK of the reaction of some of my American readers when I, the replaced and quondam misplaced person, walked into the cathedral of Villach, a place nearby, only seven miles from the Italian and Yugoslav boundaries. Hardly had I accustomed my eyes to the solemn darkness of the interior when I saw that the enthusiasm of late Gothic for the *macabre* found here the fullest expression. The walls, the pillars and the crypts of the "Dom" are practically plastered with memorial tables, tombstones and the effigies of cross-bones, skulls and skeletons. "Disce mori!" exhorts an inscription, "Learn to die!" Here, at last, we have an expression of an authentic piece of European "democracy" as already represented in the "Totentanzmotiv": death as the gate through which we all have to pass. (Yet before darkening this threshold an artificial and, after that, a real inequality, is our lot.) Still, the European thanatocentrism, the conscious, sometimes whimsical, sometimes religious or even morbid concentration on the subject of death, had come strongly to my mind—a tendency from which even the Nazis profited a great deal. And this *memento* filled me with a minor nostalgia for the long American interlude in my life. I had almost tangible visions of the color symphony of Monument Valley, of San Francisco Bay bathed in the sun, of the great, open deserts of the West and of the unbelievable blueness of Puget Sound.

But some sort of America is not so far away, and the United States, in a sense, begins behind Mallnitz. The "liberated" Austrians, no less than the defeated Germans, have the rare opportunity to study the four most powerful nations of this world in their own country; although they have the advantage of becoming acquainted with cross-sections of their *male* populations, they are hampered in their analyses by an ignorance of the respective countries, and they are prejudiced also by the political attitude of the various governments representing, for better or worse, these occupying nations.

If we take the latter as a measuring rod it cannot be doubted that the American attitude at present is the one most unreservedly friendly towards Austria, and the only one thoroughly compatible with that of a friendly, liberating nation. This could also be said of the British and the French were it not for the fact that they extract the occupation costs from this financially

bankrupt nation, whereas the Americans pay their way by actually buying schillings for dollars. Hence the reference to the "Amis" as "paying guests." To this must be added a score of other facts, as, for instance, America's support of Austria with foodstuffs and machinery, as well as America's most energetic stand against all Russian encroachments. General Mark Clark was the best friend Austria had among the Allied military leaders. The vast majority of Austrians want to collaborate unconditionally with the United States; nor can one find over here the slightest fears concerning American "Imperialism," any talk of "preserving our independence in the face of Yankee capitalism," or anything, indeed, of the sort. Even the more sophisticated know that we are in dire need of American military and material help, and that we stand and fall together. I myself have not the slightest apprehensions culturally or otherwise except that I do not look forward to the moment when, to America's great chagrin, the remnants of Europe's artificially installed democracy will collapse. If it is not engulfed by the East, we have to admit that the chances are still not too bright that it will be replaced by a non-totalitarian and liberal system, a political order not based on a single, omnipotent party rule. Yet whether we get a final victory of the liberal, mostly royalist, Right or of the Left—whether it be red, brown or black—the disestablishment of democracy will come as a new shock to most Americans, engendering or strengthening a sense of frustration.

As to the whole working of the American political system, Europeans in general, and Austrians in particular, have few misconceptions because they are *totally* ignorant concerning it. Hence they often assume that malice and diabolical Machiavellianism are at work, though both are conspicuously absent in the American scene. Even people living in the European republican democracies have no conception of the extent of amateurism, the almost Hitlerian "intuition" and absence of expertise prevailing in the American political system. Again and again I had to defend American society as such, insisting that its best human material rarely chooses scholastic careers, almost never goes into politics, and that it is absolutely unfair even to attempt a comparison of Mr. Stettinius with Talleyrand, of Mr. Ed Pauley (to whom Austria owes the whole dangerous imbroglio about "German property") with Lord Keynes, or M. Rist, of Mr. Roosevelt or

Mr. Hull with either Monsignor Seipel or Disraeli, or of Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., with Walter Rathenau. I had to use cartoons featuring "the politician" in order to illustrate his status in American society, assure them that I had met brilliant analysts of foreign affairs in the United States, but that they were not in the public eye. Some of those encumbered with immense power and deadly responsibilities had not even the qualifications for a French *bachot* given to boys of seventeen.

★

From these considerations of "high politics" we have to turn to the G.I.'s and the American civilian employees over here. They give an impression of personal vigor, of carefreeness, of a certain superiority and of innocence. Of the whole American army entering Austria the words of the Mass could be applied: "*In innocentia meâ ingressus sum.*" This does not necessarily imply moral innocence, and there have been extremely ugly cases of robbery, rape and, above all, of *wanton* destruction.

But this is merely the result of a certain type of education, and the innocence, in a deeper sense, is not diminished by it. The G.I.'s, in spite of these painful incidents, are not unpopular—they would be liked even if their purchasing power were nil. But they are complete strangers in the dark bowels of Europe and one has the impression that, although they have "fun" and a "good time," they don't really enjoy themselves over here. Most of them feel very lost and the cases are rare when you find one of them with a real grasp of either his mission in these parts, or of the particular tragedy emanating from the dreadful American-European misunderstanding. The Russian issue, at least, makes some sense to them, and there they have something on which to fix a *new dislike*, a thing psychologically so characteristic of popular armies *not* consisting of mercenary cutthroats led by modern ambitious second sons of the nobility. Of course, there are cases of young men who get Europe under their skin and know that it's no use pretending that we all are one family and of one spiritual blood; the majority is lost.

Great efforts are made to provide the Austrians at least with fragments of American culture; naturally, the opportunity to borrow American books and to read American periodicals free of charge is eagerly grasped and although a certain knowledge is imparted there are still these centuries of a Protestant past (and present) which act as a powerful obstacle. The dialectics of puritanism really don't go over. On top of it all we have the great offensive of Italian, French and German films which do not help to enhance the appeal of Hollywood. In political propaganda less stress is now placed on the word "de-

mocracy" which is promulgated with a huge propaganda barrage by the Eastern bloc; the Western nations have become a bit weary of using a term which also had its place in the nazi vocabulary and which is now monopolized by governments who employ it with a meaning close to that attributed to it by Saint Thomas, Lenin and the Founding Fathers. If Austrians use this shibboleth with a smirk it stands for communism; if they pronounce it in earnest it is used as a synonym with liberty. In neither case does it imply parliamentaryism, the party system or majority rule. There is only one expression more hackneyed and misused: fascism, which might even denote a *laissez-faire* policy. Still, American political propagandists, and especially the "reeducators," remind me only too often of a reverse picture of Mecklenburgian apostles of princely absolutism preaching their gospel in Little Rock and Kansas City after an imaginary victory of "Kaiserism" in 1918. (Stephen Leacock, if I am not mistaken, depicted once a scene in which conquering William II traveled on the New York subways.)

The psychological difficulties which the American apparatus, civil and military, encounters on the Continent are very similar to those in the path of the British counterpart. As a matter of fact, the problems faced by the British are even greater. Their *début* was disappointing especially because they were enthusiastically greeted as liberators, but their C.I.C explained that he came "as conqueror" (*als Eroberer*), and for three months British soldiers were even forbidden to exercise "common courtesy." Today, of course, the British troops have the official status of liberators and the grim history of Britain's attitude in the Anschluss days so painfully revealed in G. E. R. Gedy's "Fallen Bastions"* and the treatment of Austrians as enemy aliens during the war, are things which we all try to forget. The behavior of the British troops was, on the whole, better than that of the Americans, but was far worse than generally expected. Austrians, whose country had enjoyed a large tourist traffic, thought that they knew "the English," but actually they had only known an upper crust which is curiously unrepresentative of the country as a whole.

In the United States I had forgotten how great the social differences (in a deeper, human sense) were in Britain, and now Austrians gaped in wonderment at manners, customs and idioms which were entirely new to them. The Catholic countries of the Continent always had a *social* (but not a political) *democracy* alien to Anglo-Saxonry; especially Vienna was often cited as a city where every count was a *Wasserer* (cabbasher) and every *Wasserer* a count. Similar

* (Published in London, 1939). Yet last year a German translation, somewhat doctored was placed on the market and the Austrians eagerly swallowed this damning piece of evidence.

remarks could be made about France, Italy, Spain and even Poland. James Fenimore Cooper was the first to notice how much more humanly and humanely servants were treated in France than in either England or America. But Britain is Britain, where even the Labor Party is run by Public School boys and where the *Daily Telegraph* publishes letters to the editor about the desirability of good breeding among the officers' corps which no conservative paper in these parts of the world would have dared to publish after 1848. In this country we were ruled, except for the Nazi interlude, almost exclusively by the peasantry, and they are the most aristo-democratic crowd you can imagine.

Austrian experience with the Cockney was in many ways similar to the experience of the British countryside at the time of the internal invasion in 1940-1943. To a staunch Styrian anti-Nazi whose castle was devastated to the point that the floor of the chapel was strewn with skulls and thighbones used for the support of obstacles in horse races, the investigating British commission intimated that British castles did not fare much better—a fact duly confirmed by my British friends. The present British evolution seems to have certain corroding effects, especially in the domain of discipline, and even the factor of a controlling social pressure on the higher layers seems to be oddly relaxed. The whole British occupation also suffers from the duality between the character of the present British government and the background of the officers' corps. The friendliness of the British press in Austria towards socialism, which does amount, at least, to an indirect flirtation with a totalitarianism implied in every socialist ideology, finds a dutiful but unconvinced echo in the administration. (This "internal schism" is much more apparent in Germany, which has no real government of its own.) Colonel Blimp is not a Laborite and his means to deal effectively with the disciplinary problem seem to have been drastically curtailed. Thus the situation of the British Army in liberated Austria, draining Austrian no less than British resources, is a rather awkward one.

And, as in the case of the Americans, the psychological difficulties between British and natives are considerable. From a purely "temperamental" point of view it is easier for the Austrians to get on with the Americans. The English, moreover, are shy by nature (a quality often interpreted as "arrogance") and thus they find a difficulty in getting on the same wave length with the more ebullient *homo alpinus*. To the sorrow of the ever-growing number of British spinsters, marriages between native girls and Britishers are quite frequent, but the cultural division of geography and religion are too strong to favor anything like a real friendship. Still, if we would ask who among the occupiers are the most popular, the Anglo-Saxons would top the list. But this

popularity, to use a silly word, is "anorganic." Although we are "Teutons" the French and the Russians (politics, gratitude and self-interests apart!) are actually nearer to our mentality, especially the French, a fact of which only a few sensitive Austrians are fully conscious.

Just the other day I came across one of those starving Viennese who profit from the warmth of American and British reading rooms but he confessed what an experience it was to him to read Bernanos's "*La France contre les robots*" after a long diet of Hemingways, Steinbecks, Virginia Woolfs and Herbert Reads. He had not known the writings of Bernanos previously and he found them a revelation because the volcanic eruptions and reactions of this writer expressed the very mood of most thinking Continentals. Still, this doesn't mean that the French over here are popular *as a whole*, but it must be remembered that, while all the other occupation zones are subjected to a nationwide accepted blank judgment, the Austrians never really made up their minds about "the French." As specimens of the human race they are too "uneven," but, if we dare make a generalization, then the highest and the lowest classes find the greatest affinities. Moreover, intellectual and artistic achievements still serve as a passport among the French and they create real friendships. Just *because* they have a much older bureaucratic tradition than the Anglo-Saxon they have a greater familiarity with (and a greater contempt for) paragraphs. Armed with personality and wit you can catch their fancy and once you have caught their fancy the sky is the limit.

Yet their initial record was miserable—worse than that of the Anglo-Saxons. There was more sincere good-will in the higher and highest ranks than among any other occupation power, but the "*sous-iffs*," the men, and some officers, came with a chip on their shoulders. To make matters worse the French were given the Tyrol, the only Austrian province with: a) an anti-French tradition dating back to 1809, and b) the most anti-Nazi region with the bravest resistance record (and the least feeling of guilt.) Today they have tried radically to improve their position and I think that they have succeeded. They are building a war memorial for their men killed in the Tyrol and the inscription reads "*Mortuis Pro Libertate Austriae*."

★

The greatest chance the French have is, unfortunately, not realized by them. They could have the affections (I almost said the soul) of Germany on a platter. The old fatality hanging like a doom over the two divisions of Charlemagne's Empire prevents a fruitful rapprochement. Just because, in this war, they were among the defeated, just because they had not participated in the aerial slaughter, because they have

a common religion with half of the German-speaking world, and are true Continentals, they not only could act as missionaries, but make a real conquest—which is always one *not* based on arms. Though many would fiercely contradict me, I still believe that there is no real hatred for the Germans among the French multitudes and there is a greater readiness to accept them than even among the Americans and Britishers (not to mention the Dutch or the Czechs.) Yet the official French policy towards the German Problem lacks clarity and direction. And this needless *malaise* has its repercussions in Austria.

While the Anglo-Saxons do not have a truly dynamic, ideological and "metaphysical" policy on the Continent, the French, at least, could theoretically have one. In this sense the Western Powers are definitely at a grave disadvantage in relation to the Russians. These are messianists, they have a creed, they propagate it, and, on top of it all, they have an inner, human affinity with the Continentals which the Anglo-Saxons do not possess. This is no depreciation of the Marshall Plan whose execution is desperately needed. But the fact remains that for the reconstruction of Europe the Anglo-Saxons can only provide the brawn, not the brains. This does *not* mean that the English-speaking nations have no brains. All I want to imply is that, in the situation we are facing now, their contribution to the salvation of the Occident has to be of a predominantly material nature. Even a first-rate philosopher drafted into an army might intellectually not be qualified to do more than carry a rifle, and to an army the buck private is as essential as the marshal. Some Anglo-Saxons had a presentiment how hopeless it would be to try to "talk" to the Continent (I am thinking especially of Algernon Cecil's "Facing Facts in Foreign Policy," London, 1942, which doubted that Britain could produce a new Boniface); and others, like J. M. Keynes who in his famous *chef d'oeuvre* felt the abyss already in 1919. Having spent ten solid years in North America, and having traveled all over the map from the Gaspé to San Diego and from the Everglades to Nome, I am acutely conscious of the difficulty of transferring and transplanting the present cultural values of the United States (and even of Britain). I cannot go into the reasons for this curious phenomenon, but let us state that, even intellectually and philosophically, only the simplest and most basic terms are now interchangeable. (Oh, please, distinguish between philosophic fundamentals, as expressed in the Preamble, and the Constitution tailored to your measure!)

Here the Russians have the edge over the West. They have an "aim." They want to "travel somewhere" and provide others with destinies and destinations. They are dealers in "Missions." The Anglo-Saxons talk perhaps of "progress" but that is too one-dimensional and

the Continent is basically chiliastic. Even Switzerland is not a "dead point" as some of you assume. Too many Anglo-Saxons behold a mirage of Switzerland which they would like to apply to the rest of Europe if not to the rest of the world. But to such lifelessness the best Austrians prefer a *Reichs*-idea (be it that of the historic *Osterreich* with its mission or a Holy Roman *Reich*), while the worst of them will rather accept the apocalyptic magic of a Proletarian or a Racial Millenium. A middle-of-the-road solution with "decent business dealings" is out—not only for Austria but for the rest of the Continent. Nor should the fact that communism is *intellectually* completely bankrupt increase our hopes. The Soviets have their Cloud of Fear traveling in front of them; they have a dynamic creed and a great though horrible vision; and they have human affinities only the French can boast of. You might possibly remember the Russian atrocities in 1945 which were without parallel in their brutality but they do not cancel the fact of the fundamental Russian humanity. The rank and file Austrians hate and fear the Russians, but the more sensitive men say with a sigh: "If they only weren't in the clutches of this terrible system. *Personally* they can be such likable fellows." It isn't difficult to interpret the sign. And bear in mind that, like all non-Protestant nations of Europe, they are very individualistic and "very unlike each other." Hence the glaring exceptions in their behavior. Their looting was prodigious but there were very few cases of wanton destruction. There were fourteen Russians in my sister's apartment, and not a spoon was stolen. The owner of a place in the American zone which was smashed up by the nostalgic GI's has a brother in Styria. Not only did the Russians behave excellently in his house but when they withdrew, their lieutenant-colonel, as a sign of respect, kissed the old gentleman's hand in public.

Of course, the Russians *en masse* become part of a "system" and this coercive if not enslaving system is the price truly anarchical nations pay for their rejection of a simple paternalism. (Only mentally uniform nations with a strict social control and a flourishing team-spirit have "free governments," hence the Protestant thesis of Catholic inferiority, a thesis refuted by some of our coreligionists with the most awkward and contemptible dialectic contortions.) Egalitarianism among the Russians has been dropped a long time ago and, with the exception of India, "hierarchical" differences are probably nowhere as high as in the USSR. This is not a return to aristocracy or feudalism in the historic sense because the tremendous power wielded by individuals is not independent, or even autonomous, but merely "lunar light" emanating from one solar center.

Most of the Russians, unless characterized by a Mongoloid strain, put into a local garb, would not look very different from Austrians. Nor

would the French. Yet the English officers are too "Nordic" and the Americans have not perhaps strange "looks," but, certainly, an *expression* of their own which places them apart. Humanly appealing also is the marked artistic temperament of the Russians; for artistic endeavors the Russian Occupation authorities have plenty of time, money and personal enthusiasm. But a serious handicap in Austro-Russian relations is arising from the increasing emphasis on non-fraternization and isolation in the directives of the High Command. I consider myself fairly lucky in having succeeded in talking intimately to several Russians. These were very pleasant talks and I found most of these men indifferent as to communism but conformists in matter of foreign policy. There is definite evidence of religious beliefs in those of middle age. (A major about a First Lieutenant: "He doesn't believe in God but remember he's still quite young!") There is also a religious revival among the *very* young ones. All in all I would say that one gets some sort of intuitive impression that in the more dis-

tant future something positive might yet develop in Russia—a statement which in no way contradicts the fact that our values *hinc et nunc*, face an enormous challenge and a terrible menace. In an age of chaos, ideologies, cultures, temperaments and mentalities may be completely at cross purpose.

The Russian atrocities in 1945, and their continuing brutal policies of suppression and deportation, have eliminated in Austria voluntary communist support for decades to come. But these horrors, whatever our "nervous" reactions may be, should not upset us in the least—nor, one has to add, should we have lost our balance over the nightmarish deeds of the nazis. Indeed, we must deem it a miracle that the "time lag" following the evaporation of a living faith lasted so long. On the other hand the blunt infractions of the Natural Law by the Western Powers will always be measured *far more severely* because they have waged this war in the name of "Christian civilization" and not in terms of bellies or chromosomes.

Should Radio Be As Free as the Press?

Edward J. Heffron

IF A POLL were taken on the above question, I believe the overwhelming majority of Americans would say "Yes." And it is my further belief that they would be demonstrably and mischievously wrong.

The problem is particularly pointed at the moment because, on March 1, there are to be some very important hearings in Washington on the question of whether the owners of radio stations should be allowed to editorialize. Obviously if one thinks that radio should be as free as the press, one will think it should have freedom to editorialize.

Why not?

No reason at all, in this writer's opinion, provided contrary points of view have equal access to the air. But every reason, practical and legal, if it is to be freedom to editorialize with exclusive one-sidedness, and if that freedom is to be limited to two or three thousand favored citizens and denied to the other 140 million.

But, say the broadcasters, there are only 1,750 daily newspapers in the country, and no one argues that this is a sufficient reason for imposing conditions on freedom of the press.

Which is true. But it overlooks a very significant difference between radio and press. The

government says nothing about how a newspaper shall be run because the government has no special responsibilities with respect to the newspaper. It accords full freedom to all citizens to publish newspapers wherever they want, in any size, in any quantity, circulated over any area. The fact that it is a very expensive undertaking and that few can afford to launch a new paper is not the government's fault and the government has no responsibility for it.

But radio is another matter. The government says who may broadcast and who may not. It chooses between two or more applicants for a radio license, equally entitled to the freedoms of American citizens, and gives the license to one, withholds it from the other. Hence it cannot avoid a very large degree of responsibility for what its preferred beneficiaries do with its favors.

The *Chicago Tribune* has editorial freedom, and uses it to espouse conservatism and isolationism. If the progressives and the internationalists were dissatisfied with this arrangement and felt they should have a comparable outlet for their freedom of speech, they were free to start another paper right there in Chicago. In fact one of them did, Marshall Field.

Suppose the Chicago press were to start editor-

ializing along the line of "Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State." If Catholics were aggrieved, they could start another daily. And this is not a mere academic right. If their grievance were sufficient, who can doubt that the Catholics of Chicago could piece together enough dimes and dollars to underwrite the venture?

So also if the Chicago press were to become anti-Semitic or anti-Negro, the Jews and the Negroes and those non-Jewish and non-Negro Chicagoans whose sense of justice was outraged, could easily scrape together enough money to put a new competitor in the field.

The same would be true if the Chicago press were to become 100 percent anti-Labor or anti-Republican or anti-almost-anything-else.

But suppose Chicago radio were to become isolationist or anti-Catholic or anti-Semitic or the rest. With all the money they could muster, the Liberals and the Catholics and the Jews, et al., would be able to do nothing about it. That is, they would be able to do nothing about answering their detractors in the same medium, for the government would have to say, We're sorry, but there are no more frequencies available in Chicago. Or if it did manage to shake out another license in that area, it would undoubtedly be for a 250-watt station limited, in all probability, to transmission via directional antenna, dawn-to-dusk, on a shared channel. Whereas the *Chicago Tribune's* station transmits at 50,000 watts, around the compass and around the clock, on a channel shared with no one. That is a 200-to-1 advantage in power alone, not counting the other differentials.

In such a hypothetical case, it is the government that would be responsible for this rank favoritism. Has the government, then, any responsibility in the premises? I think it has.

But the average reader of these lines may be disposed to regard the possibilities I have set out as possibilities, yes, but very remote and far-fetched. He may think, or half-think, that we've had radio for over twenty-five years and this sort of thing hasn't happened yet. Why worry?

But it has happened. Very little of it, it's true, But I submit that the reason is that when it has happened, the government has struck it down; and it has struck it down on the theory that it does have the special responsibility I'm arguing for, and the power that goes with such responsibility, which is a power it does not have over the press. Establish the principle of a radio as free as the press, and the government will lose that power; and I confidently predict that if such a state of affairs comes to pass, anti-Catholic stations, anti-Semitic stations, anti-Labor stations, White Supremacy stations, will inevitably spring up.

I say it has happened. In the early thirties the Rev. "Bob" Shuler was having a great time badgering the Catholics of Los Angeles. But when his license came up for renewal, the Federal Radio Commission held that the use to which he had been putting it was not in the "public interest, convenience, or necessity"—the *sine qua non*, according to federal statute—and refused to renew. If he had been publishing an anti-Catholic newspaper—like the *Fellowship Forum* or *The Menace*—the government would have had no power to intervene. So the holding of the Federal Radio Commission was a contradiction of the principle of "a radio as free as the press." And it was upheld by the Courts.

★

The question arises: Should the government have the right to say who may and who may not broadcast, and on what frequency and at what power, etc.? I take it there will be no disagreement that if anyone should have such power, it should be the government, as representative of all the people. But should anyone? Well, if no one had it, we'd have domestic radio chaos. Smith and Jones probably wouldn't try to broadcast on the same frequency in New York, for then no one could hear either station clearly, and neither would be able to sell any time for advertising. But Smith might well start a station in Boston on the same frequency being used by Jones in New York, and be able to lay down a sufficiently clear signal in Boston, as the broadcasters say, to be able to sell Boston advertising, without interfering with Jones's clear signal and time sales in New York. Thus both would be able to show a profit; both could continue indefinitely. But meanwhile, the poor citizens living between Boston and New York would really be in the middle. They'd be able to enjoy no radio service whatever on that frequency. And such competitive situations could well develop on all frequencies, with the ultimate result that only metropolites would have any reliable radio service at all, the citizens living in smaller communities and rural areas getting virtually nothing but cross-talk.

Far-fetched? Precisely such a situation obtained in some degree, and was on the increase, in 1926, because of a breakdown in federal regulation. That's why the Congress hurried through the Radio Act of 1927, which clearly stipulated that the necessary condition for granting or renewing a radio license (they're only good for three years) is service of the public interest, convenience, or necessity. Under that philosophy, radio is obviously not as free as the press.

If the contrary philosophy were to prevail, there would be other serious disadvantages besides the loss of radio service to millions of Americans. If the government couldn't regulate radio,

it couldn't honor its international radio agreements, which assure certain channels for domestic use and reserve other channels for foreign use. But what is probably even worse, it couldn't protect the channels that it now reserves for nautical and aeronautical safety services, for police radio, for army and navy radar, etc.

The majority of broadcasters would like *carte blanche* in the operation of what they conceive to be their private business. They don't want the government telling them that if they broadcast anti-ERP editorials, they must give the supporters of ERP a chance to state their case; or telling them that they may not limit their broadcasts to soap-opera or disc jockey shows from morning to night, seven days a week, if that should prove more profitable. So they are demanding the same freedoms enjoyed by the press.

They note that the whole basis of federal regulation is the insufficiency of channels, rightly contending that if there were room for an unlimited number of equal radio stations everywhere, as there is room for an unlimited number of equal newspapers everywhere, there would be no justification for radio regulation. Since "scarcity" is a synonym for "insufficiency," they call this the "scarcity argument." Then by a neat trick of semantics they switch the pea under another shell and point out that a great number of new stations have been licensed since the war, and therefore there's no scarcity of channels at all. For doesn't "scarcity" mean "rarity?"

Their argument against the scarcity argument also conveniently overlooks the "equal" and the "everywhere." A 250-watt station can't fairly compete with a 50,000-watt station, even if there weren't differentials as to directional antennae, part-time operation, etc. It labors under a 200 to 1 handicap, multiplied by all these other differences. And as to the "everywhere," a citizen who has been denied a license to broadcast in Chicago or New York will get small comfort from the fact that a frequency may be available in a small town in Wyoming.

This vocal majority of broadcasters also argues that scarcity of newsprint is on all fours comparable to scarcity of frequencies, and that issuance of mailing permits to newspapers is comparable to issuance of licenses to broadcasters.

But the government doesn't say who may have newsprint, who may not. If it ever does (except during emergencies like the war), it will probably have to regulate newspapers, too.

And as to issuance of second-class permits, it is obvious that a newspaper owner *can* publish without it, and that there is no limit to the number of such permits that can issue, whereas radio licenses are absolutely indispensable and are definitely limited in the number available.

The champions of "a radio as free as the press" have one other argument, and a very

plausible one it is. They argue thus:

Admitted that radio was not so much as dreamed of when the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were adopted. But it has been held, nevertheless, that the Commerce Clause of the Constitution applies to radio, for if it didn't the federal government would have no powers over radio whatsoever, such powers then falling among those reserved to the States. But if the Commerce Clause is to be taken as applying, by reasonable extension, to radio, then the First Amendment must apply similarly. So far so good. And that's as far as these advocates of a "free radio" go—except to point out that if the First Amendment applies to radio, then the government has no power to abridge the free speech of the broadcaster, no power to attach any conditions to its exercise.

The argument is in itself logical, except that its advocates don't accept its full logic. For if their argument were sound, the government would not only have no right to tell an applicant, Smith, to whom it grants a license, that he must broadcast in the public interest, convenience, or necessity, it would have no right to tell Smith's competitive applicant, Jones, that he may not broadcast at all.

The flaw in their argument lies in their avoidance of the question of what is *reasonable* extension of the applicability of Constitutional provisions. It is reasonable to extend the purview of the Commerce Clause to embrace radio because the federal government is the only agency which can effectively prevent national and international anarchy of the airwaves, since 1) radio transmissions travel beyond state and national boundaries and 2) the federal government alone can enter into engagements with foreign nations. But it would be unreasonable to extend the protections of the First Amendment to radio because those protections apply to all citizens so, if it were thus extended, no one would be able to say that Smith may broadcast on such-and-such a frequency but Jones may not, or Smith must limit himself to such-and-such a wattage or must not broadcast on the frequencies reserved for radar, for safety services, for other nations, etc.

What has all this to do with the hearings that are to be held in Washington on March 1?

Let's get a principle clear. If Smith is an anti-vivisectionist and editorializes accordingly over his station, I contend he should be required to give the vivisectionists a right of reply. But not so much in deference to the rights of the vivisectionists as in deference to the rights of all listeners. The important thing is not the vivisectionist's right to state his case. It's the public's right to hear both sides of the case—all sides, if there are more than two. That's where the "public interest, convenience or necessity" comes in.

Now the March first hearings are in reexamination of an opinion handed down in 1940 by the Federal Communications Commission (successor to the Federal Radio Commission), in the so-called Mayflower case. That opinion was somewhat ambiguous. It held either that broadcasters may not editorialize at all, or that they may not editorialize unless they give other points of view an equal shot at the microphone. As a result of these hearings, FCC will determine which of these two interpretations shall be the rule henceforth, or whether the rule should be a third possibility; i.e., that broadcasting may editorialize unconditionally, in other words, with exclusive one-sidedness.

I maintain that if this third possibility should eventuate, the principle of a radio based on public interest, convenience, or necessity will have been breached. The principle will have been established, or will be well on its way to being established, that radio should be as free as the press. Then all the unfortunate possibilities set out at the beginning of this article will, in my judgment, follow in its wake. If the public isn't entitled, by law, to hear both sides of controversial public issues that go to the very heart of our democracy, then on what ground may one contend that it's entitled to hear classical music as well as boogie-woogie, educational broadcasts as well as giveaway programs, religion as well as soap opera? None, I contend. Which is to say that all public service broadcasts—religion, education, classical music, etc.—will be in jeopardy. Unless they pay their own way. But religion and education haven't a product to sell, in the literal sense, so they can never hope to be able to compete with the hucksters on time rates. What will happen to such programs? On the more responsible stations, little or nothing. On the less responsible stations, plenty. And the profits will be on the side of the less responsible. Hence they may confidently be counted on to multiply.

What our friends, the broadcasters, are overlooking is that if they succeed in this adventure, they'll be sawing off their own limb. The chief value of a radio station today does not inhere in its physical equipment. Nor even in its "good will." Its chief capital asset is its exclusive frequency and power.

But if those broadcasters who are doing most of the talking have their way and succeed in getting freedom to editorialize as they will, with complete and thoroughgoing one-sidedness, it can only be by establishing their contention that the First Amendment guarantees free broadcast speech. If so, I maintain, the courts will be bound to hold that this free broadcast speech is guaranteed to all citizens, and that the legislative and executive branches of our government have no right to deny it to any citizen. That will be

the death of preferential licensing, of the exclusivity enjoyed by today's broadcasts, and of the goose that lays their golden eggs.

But that may take several years in the courts. And in the meantime anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, anti-Labor stations will have plenty of room—and plenty of time—in which to thrive. As a Catholic I should be greatly concerned if radio stations were free to jump into the "Protestants and Others" controversy against us, with no right on our part to state the Catholic case, even if it were only for a year or two. By that time we Catholics could have suffered virtually irreparable injury. Why Catholics are not more concerned about the Mayflower hearings is a mystery to me. Perhaps it's because they don't understand the implications—to us and to all Americans. Let us hope that they will—in time. And the time is March 1, or soon thereafter.

Communications

"THE MILITARIZATION OF AMERICA"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Your editorial of January 30 expresses surprise that a group of prominent Americans should issue a report on "The Militarization of America." When you indicate that you don't believe that civilian control is disappearing, you don't support your statement with any facts to show that the Army and the Navy have not extended their influence into science, education and industry. Actually, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and many other civic groups have been warning us again and again about the dangers of military control of science.

From the standpoint of history, I think it would be difficult for THE COMMONWEAL to show that the present communist régime and the nazis and the fascists could have remained in power without the support of conscription and militarization. Was it not the militarist clique in Japan which went so far as to assassinate civilian leaders who opposed the Manchurian war!

THE COMMONWEAL which gets all of our releases ought to know of our vigorous stand against communism, and we don't favor Wallace for President.

We believe that America can best give creative leadership to the world if she continues to have a civilian controlled democracy as provided for by our Founding Fathers.

JOHN M. SWOMLEY, JR.,

National Council Against Conscription.

THE COMMONWEAL editorial also recognized an extension of military influence in science, education, industry, and "all through the fabric of the state and society." It did not find the increase to be *abnormal* for a time of military peril, for a country utilizing power as an instrument of national policy. A citizenry cannot at once have a strong power policy (cake), and also complete freedom and insulation from domestic military men

and measures (eat it too). The National Council Against Conscription is the prosecutor, and the burden of proof that our situation is abnormal rests upon them.

THE COMMONWEAL did not say that the communists and nazis could have *remained* in power without militarization. We said, and affirm, "Totalitarianism and the historically present actuality and threat of tyranny are solidly civilian creations." Trotsky formed a new army out of bolsheviks and other civilians. The old military guard of Germany opposed Hitler's advent, and plotted against him after Hitler got there and created out of civilian nazis a new army submerging the traditional military elements.

Of course THE COMMONWEAL recognizes the National Council Against Conscription as a thoroughly—and eminently—patriotic and public spirited organization, which we hope can be taken for granted. In motive, intention and aim it certainly opposes communism and Wallace for President, etc., and we would not imply otherwise, and to the extent we could be interpreted as doing so, apologize. But in the political turmoil of the present, with all the crude slogans and the blunt propaganda, THE COMMONWEAL feared, and does fear, that the actual effect of the early releases on "The Militarization of America" was toward confusion of the great problems of war and peace and of principle and appeasement. That criticism was offered while this magazine also reaffirms its profoundest, constitutional loyalty to civilian controlled democracy.

THE EDITORS.

BOSWELL'S BOSWELL

San Francisco, Calif.

TO the Editors: The review entitled "Boswell's Boswell," which appears in your issue of January 23, contains a curious and misleading error. It states that the book under review deserves to "set (sic) . . . beside Roper's 'Household of Sir Thomas More.'"

Roper did not write "The Household of Sir Thomas More." Its author was Miss Anne Manning, a rather prolific nineteenth century writer, who died in 1885.

Roper's famous work is usually entitled "The Life of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight." Variations in the titles found in the early manuscripts are set forth in the introduction to the edition of Roper's Life published in 1935 by the Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society.

MAURICE E. HARRISON.

SQUIRRELS, DEER and PARTISAN ANIMUS

Avon, Minn.

TO the Editors: How is it that I find you saying on page 338 that "THE COMMONWEAL, January 16, tackles the perplexing issues confronting the United States and various American or foreign localities—without personal or partisan animus, etc." and on page 355 I find your erstwhile able critic Mr. Emerson Hynes, in a glowing review of Alan Devoe's "Speaking of Animals," lashing out against a section of the American people in this manner: "That portion of our population whose contact with animals is confined to lap dogs will get no consolation from this book; and urban people whose budgets prevent them from getting away from the city to

the depths of the woods had better not read it. Envy is one of the capital sins." It beats me!

Moreover, it strikes me as poor service to Mr. Devoe to recommend his book with those reservations. Statistics show that the book-buying public is made up almost entirely of persons from the two groups under fire. Authors and publishers would be in worse shape than they are now if it weren't for city folk. *Let's be fair!* (italics mine).

Mr. Hynes also states that he saw a four point buck deer making his way through the snow and stopping to paw for grass beneath the neighbor's apple tree. Come now, Mr. Hynes! I know the Hynes country well from the bracing walks I am wont to take in my leather shorts, hobnailed boots and green jacket, always with an eye out for nature; and I have yet to see a single deer, buck or otherwise. In all fairness I must confess I have seen in the snow what would *seem* to be deer-prints but I have no way of *knowing* they were made by a real live deer. In truth, to date, in all this country where, according to Mr. Hynes, nearly all thirty animals and birds selected by Mr. Devoe are to be found, I have come across (a) one red squirrel and (b) several woodpeckers.

Yes, Mr. Hynes, Envy is indeed one of the capital sins, but Prudence is still a cardinal virtue.

J. F. POWERS.

I'M GOING TO ASK HER

Upper Montclair, N. J.

TO the Editors: In his spirited article in your January 30th issue Mr. Shannon Doyle states that it costs \$1,000 to have a baby. This is an old fallacy which I have heard many times; it is untrue even in these days of inflated living costs. Lest anyone be frightened by Mr. Doyle's estimate I should like to summarize the initial expenses for our own little boy, born within the year:

Doctor and Hospital	\$158.50
Nurse at home (10 days)	70.00
Carriage, Crib, etc.	121.00
Clothing and Linen	60.77
Drugs—first month	10.95

Total\$421.22

The first figure might be a hundred dollars higher without hospitalization insurance, which we have. But the baby's basket and bathinette, which are included in our figures, are not absolutely essential while a relative can often replace the nurse. Other major items such as a crib or carriage can often be borrowed. A baby nearly always receives a lot of clothing and other useful things as gifts. On the basis of talking with a number of fellow-parents I feel sure that \$500 is a more likely average cost of having a baby. I have no data on the cost of a child's upkeep through the years.

A MOTHER.

RELIEF

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I am one of the Sisters of the Visitation and there are all sorts of orders of sisters all over the world and there are many of them who are find-

ing it hard to exist—materially—and it is not at all in the spirit of our order to talk about ourselves or to complain about poverty. It was a member of our order, Saint Marguerite Marie Alacocque, whose favorite maxim was "*souffrir—et se taire*," and if I, a Frenchwoman, have come to America from France, and am not silent, and am begging, it is because there is no other way out.

One of our houses is in Grasse, on that Riviera known to so many Americans. It was founded in 1610 and it shelters (?) twenty-nine nuns, most of whom are aged and infirm or ill. Its annual revenue is about \$150 a year; the nuns go hungry, in consequence, and the ancient building is falling to pieces. But these cloistered nuns continue to pray for the world, they ask Saint François de Sales and Saint Jeanne Françoise de Chantal, their founders, to intercede—tired, hidden, hungry and alone, their prayer is a central element in the Providential design.

We know that Americans are always asked for everything by everybody. That is why we are asking also. There would be something wrong with our humility were we not to turn for help where we know there is some chance for our appeal to be heard.

SISTER MARIE-CHRISTINE,
of the Sisters of the Visitation.

Contributions may be sent to Sister Marie-Christine, Monastery of the Visitation, 256 Street and Arlington Avenue, New York 63, N. Y.

We have also had appeals recently on behalf of the following, most of them religious houses engaged in charitable work:

Father Francis Zannini
Cannaregio 3280
Venezia, Italy.

Rev. Leo Zimmerman, O.M.I.
Oblatenkloster St. Nicolaus
über Neuss, II, Br. Zone, Germany.

Rev. Mother Badessa
Monastero delle Clarisse
Angolo via Vitellia e via Casaletto
Monteverde Nuovo, Rome, Italy.

Dr. Bela B. Borsody
Nap utca 20 (I-4)
Budapest, VIII, Hungary.

Sister Betty Jonas
Superior, Caritas Sisters
Burgstrasse 44, Aachen (22a)
Rheinland, Germany.

SAFE, Inc. (*Save a Friend in Europe*) of 40 Exchange Place, New York 5, N. Y., has stockpiled food in a number of cities of Austria and Germany. It can deliver its \$10 packages to people in those two countries within a week of being ordered here. CARE (50 Broad St., New York 5, N. Y.) has \$10 food and clothing packages it will deliver to any of the countries in the above list.—THE EDITORS.



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FAMILY ALLOWANCES LEGISLATION

MR. O. J. BONDY of Toronto, and Miss A. C. Sweeney of Ottawa have written to point out that the figures we gave, in the December 26 issue, for the Canadian family allowance system were egregiously inaccurate. THE COMMONWEAL was primarily interested in calling attention to the fact of a family wage system in operation close at hand, but that does not excuse the faulty mathematics. Mr. W. Q. Egan of 1051 Cherry St., Winnetka, Illinois, who is secretary of a Future Citizens Committee, has sent in a persuasive brochure to the effect that the income tax exemption of \$500 per dependent should be graduated up to \$1,000 as the number of children in a household increases.

THE EDITORS.

The Stage & Screen

Four One-Act Comedies

JOSE FERRER (& Co.) is providing four of the shorter Chekov pieces at the City Center and I think it's an intriguing evening. The bill consists of "A Tragedian in Spite of Himself," "The Bear," and "The Wedding," together with the monologue, "On the Harmfulness of Tobacco," which is delivered by Mr. Ferrer. I don't imagine any of the sketches—with the exception of "The Bear," which has too often been mangled by drama classes—have been seen before. They are all high farce

and are played with what might be called *dash* by the company. Richard Whorf handles two of the larger assignments. As the overburdened Summer Resident in the first piece, and the toppling General of "The Wedding," he is quite wonderfully, movingly funny. I don't think the latter piece is successful; perhaps it never could be. There is somehow or other a wrong mixture of *pathetique* contained in it. It's all laugh for too long, with a sudden cry at the end. And just because of this imbalance, the cry comes off as an almost inaudible whimper. Moreover the business—a bourgeois wedding party, incessantly crowded, incessantly loud—gets tiresome, and leans for most of its effects on all the old clichés of action and feeling: the so-called "Russian-ness" of everything. On the other hand, Mr. Ferrer, Frances Reid, and Francis Letton deal most excellently with "The Bear." They are severally neat, sure, wholly skilled, uproarious. I think, in their first season, this company has made a good dent in what is certainly the most dynamic audience in town, and the very first week in which there are no printers' holidays and the editors have space to spare, I mean to write about them at length and as respectfully as possible. (*at the City Center*)

A Long Way Home

I'VE GOT exactly twenty-two lines in which to assure you that the Experimental Theatre's third production is very good stuff indeed. The play is an adaptation of Gorki's "Lower Depths," adjusted to a North Carolina Negro scene and, as far as I can remember, the authors, Randolph Goodman and Walter Carroll, have not departed in any blatant detail from the original. The piece is delivered by a number of the best actors it has been my privilege to attend in any season. There are, of course, few if any poor Negro actors; but this is a cast of some twenty unknowns and I wish I could list each and every one of them. In any case, please mark down at least Catherine Ayers, Maurice Ellis, Ruby Dee, and Alonzo Bozan on your private record for excellence. But what is really the crux of the business will be this: *it is not fiddled, it is played*. Leo Kerz has provided a most provocative set which justifies the authors' lines and is used by the actors to act in, rather than pose. Whoever the director, Alan Schneider, is—his ought really to be the gold star of the evening. However incredible, he does not seem to be interested in promotion, billing, or any kind of large-scale shock technique. At the moment I can think of nothing more Experimental than this kind of honest attack. Or anything more important. (*at the Maxine Elliott*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

This Thing Called Love

LOVE, in the movies, at least, and frequently in real life, makes people behave very strangely. Several new films gang up on this idea and work like everything to prove their point. In "*A Woman's Vengeance*," Jessica Tandy loves Charles Boyer who has been married for many years to an unpleasant, whining invalid (Rachel Kempson). Thinking that Boyer is seriously interested in herself, Jessica poisons the wife and then gets a real shock when Boyer marries a young girl (Ann Blyth)

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with whom he's been having an affair. I have not revealed too much of this plot, for its suspense comes not so much in the murder angle, which is pretty obvious, as in what follows when Jessica cleverly lets Boyer be blamed and convicted for the murder. Aldous Huxley wrote this script from his own short story, "The Gioconda Smile," and Zoltan Korda produced and directed. With this interesting array of names and the fine cast (which also includes Cedric Hardwicke and Mildred Natwick) one might expect some first-rate cinema; but the result is somehow more literary than cinematic. The script, though on a high mental level, is too talky: the story is revealed more through the bright dialogue than through the camera; and the whole piece is more intellectually stimulating than emotionally moving. Much of this is due no doubt to the fact that all the characters are so thoroughly unpleasant, and the audience sits back and watches instead of projecting itself into any of the situations. However this audience is treated to at least one outstanding performance: Miss Tandy's portrayal of love-into-hate.

Love prompts Merle Oberon, in "*Night Song*," to pretend she's blind in order to soften and win Dana Andrews, a pianist-composer who is very bitter about his blindness—which is real. Dana falls for Merle's ruse in which she is helped by her aunt (Ethel Barrymore) and Dana's good friend (Hoagy Carmichael) and also by her own dough. Merle uses some of this cash, of which she has plenty, as a prize for the best piece of music by an American composer. I'm not sure whether Dana's concerto wins on its own merits or through Merle's pull; but in any case he hurries to New York where his composition is conducted by Ormandy with Rubinstein at the piano. Still in New York Dana uses the prize money to regain his eyesight, and then he immediately falls in love with Merle—but doesn't know she's the "blind girl" back home! I'm telling this much of this plot because I am sure you will not want to see this movie. It's much easier to listen to a soap opera on the radio. Producer-director John Cromwell and all this acting and musical talent do little to make the story palatable; and all of Hollywood's slickness cannot disguise the inane dialogue which these characters have to talk. Just call the whole thing "Blind Man's Bluff."

Love for his wife (Paulette Goddard) inspires Burgess Meredith to act like a roving reporter and ask a lot of people about the influence a little child has had on their lives. After this hopeful start, "*A Miracle Can Happen*" relates three episodes in which a "child" figures very largely indeed: Musicians James Stewart and Henry Fonda fail to let the mayor's son win a fixed contest; Dorothy Lamour and Victor Moore get a start in Hollywood through the efforts of a child star; Fred MacMurray and William Demarest aren't half as tough as the junior gangster who does them in. No doubt the prose that Meredith writes about these three episodes is much funnier than what we see; his editor is greatly impressed and finally offers him the job as the roving reporter. Meredith really believes in miracles, however, when Paulette tells him she is going to have a baby. The

TO TELL YOU A SECRET—

we don't much like being given lists of books we ought to read in Lent. If Lent is to get into our reading, that, we feel, is penance indeed. We would rather have a list of books to get us in the mood for Lent (we always achieve this mood on Ash Wednesday, but it wears off almost as soon as the ashes, and we have to begin again). Well, here is such a list, chiefly intended to rouse readers from that mid-Lent slump.

PRIEST-WORKMAN IN GERMANY by Henri Perrin, S.J. (\$2.50) of which you have already heard. Priests sit up nights to finish it (and laymen too, but that is less startling, *they* don't have to get up for the 6:30 Mass).

THE DRY WOOD by Caryll Houselander (\$3.00) A novel abounding in portraits of the clergy. We seem to recognize each one, their holiness and peculiarities, their complete difference from each other. This is an oddly moving story, not much plot, but the characters stay with you as if you had known them for years.

FISHERS OF MEN by Maxence van der Meersch (\$3.00) A fierce sort of novel about the French Jockists, how little they could achieve before the war, and why. But how wonderful it was, given the conditions, that they achieved anything at all!

DEAR BISHOP by Catherine de Hueck (\$1.75) Letters to a Bishop from a working girl, written by the author when she was living as one during the war, and seeing at first hand just how pathetically lost the Church's lost sheep can be.

THEOLOGY AND SANITY by F. J. Sheed (\$3.00) This is not spiritual reading, but a complete theology for laymen—an invitation to see the whole of reality as it is, which is to say an invitation to sanity, "and sanity" says the author "points straight to sanctity." We think if you read two or three of these, you may feel equal to a little straight spiritual reading. Then you can write to us for our Lenten list. (Yes, we do have one; it's expected of us, after all.)

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miracle in connection with this picture is that so much first-rate talent could be poured into such an incredibly dull movie. It is hard to believe that King Vidor and Leslie Fenton directed it (as the credits read) for some of the scenes don't seem to be directed at all. Stewart and Fonda are embarrassingly bad; and at times the other members of the cast seem to have no idea what they are supposed to be doing. And one wonders what writers like Laurence Stallings, Lou Breslaw, Arch Oboler and John O'Hara did or did not contribute to the whole. Of course even a fumbling picture like this has its amusing moments; the best of which, surprisingly enough, is put over by Dorothy Lamour who sings a witty satire called "The Queen of the Hollywood Islands." The real laughs are few and far between. It's too bad that the scene in which Burgess Meredith turns to the audience and tells them to go away doesn't occur nearer the picture's beginning. They'd go far, far away.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books

The Saint and the Devil: The Story of Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais. A biographical study in Good and Evil. Frances Winwar. Harper. \$3.75.

A RETELLING of a well-known story which, over and over again, has tempted many writers. Great literary figures are associated with biographies, studies, or at least, presentations, of Joan: Voltaire, Michelet, Goyau, France, Barrès, Twain, Shaw, etc. Some biographers admired and were devoted to her. Some admired her, and tried to explain her away. Some, like Grillot de Givry, took great pains to prove her a hoax. One way or another, writing about Joan, whether accepting or denying her, has always been a mighty business.

Frances Winwar has now made her try at it. It is a very commendable attempt. The author's scholarship is impressive and she has used her material with discrimination. She has given a fine picture of the background of the times, life in the country, in towns, at court and throughout the kingdom of France—"la grande pitié au royaume de France." Even for a reader acquainted with several of other and famous biographies of Joan, Frances Winwar's book still captures the attention. Closing the book I wondered why it did. And I found that I had gone on reading steadily in the hope that sometime or other the author would step out of her orderly narrative into the unchartered path which was Joan's path, which was Joan herself.

Frances Winwar gives us an accurate and certainly sympathetic picture of Joan, and the way she chooses neither to justify nor explain her away, seems, in principle, to be the proper way for the historian. Why is it that her account leaves us unsatisfied, as if something had been missed, something so fundamental that it is like speaking of one geometrical figure instead of another. Frances Winwar carefully inscribes the isosceles triangle—Joan-Charles VII-Gilles de Rais—within the circumference of the circle that France is, whereas what should be talked about is a tangent, Joan, touching that circumference at one point. Irrespective of our belief or disbelief, saints are unpredictable, scandalous, all are highly

disproportionate human beings. When Anatole France explains Joan away, or when Shaw makes of her a Protestant before the letter, they still bring to their study a perception not so much of the mystery that Joan is, but of that mystery's dimension.

With Frances Winwar we have none of this, and consequently she fails to convey Joan's message. Is it that the life of a saint being a total commitment cannot be approached adequately except by a corresponding possibility within ourselves, the total commitment being on the religious or artistic plane? Talent is not sufficient here no matter how great. Short of being a saint himself, the biographer should have genius.

As for the chapters devoted to Gilles de Rais they are entirely superfluous. The link made by the author between Joan and Gilles is artificial. So much so that one wonders if the bringing together of the two names was not a publisher's stunt in order to make a striking jacket. A study of Gilles de Rais, who became erroneously identified with Blue Beard, would require much more than the seven chapters out of the thirty in the book.

From what has been said it becomes evident that the subtitle, "a biographical study in Good and Evil," is misleading. Neither in the story of Joan nor in that of Gilles does Frances Winwar live up to it. A real study in Good and Evil involves an entirely different approach, scientific and medical, to say nothing of Christian.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

Tales From Ireland. Retold by Gerard Murphy. Desmond. \$2.50.

WURRA! Wurra! The little people of Ireland are back again! Gerard Murphy has listened to the story-makers from Ballydavid, Ballyvourney and Caherscullibeen, heard "Little MacCarthy and Big MacCarthy," "The Wren and the Yellow-Hammer," "Brother John" and other tales told in the original Gaelic. He has transformed them into fairy-stories for the English-speaking little people. So it is as tales for children that we must pass judgment on "Tales from Ireland."

Mr. Murphy admits to diluting his delightful twice-told tales on the grounds that some of their quirks and fantasies were not suitable for tender ears. This is a false premise. From a child's viewpoint, short of his initiative Mother Goose, he wants his blood-and-thunder straight, even if he doesn't grasp its more terrestrial implications. What would "Snow-White" be without the Witch (sans the Disney grotesquerie, of course) or Jack without his Giant? It strikes me that in his purifying process Mr. Murphy has removed the vitals from his Irish tales whether they consisted of Gaelic humor, amour, or heroic description. This is no favor to a child if he wants to hear or read this traditional folk-lore at all.

The black and white drawings of Seamus MacNeill are adequately realistic, the format good. Shame on ye, Misther Murphy, for deprivin' the wee ones of their foine, slashin' pleasures! ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

The Story of American Railroads. Stewart H. Holbrook. Crown. \$4.50.

DOWN at the roundhouse and up in the trainmen's room the boys all say this book is a honey. The new trick dispatcher at JC says with scholarly reserve and caution: "For the reader who is at home with the subject, Holbrook's book will, in the main, be an assem-

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bly of oft-told tales, but in the composite these become a thrilling story. Holbrook has woven men, events, folklore and mechanical and financial evolution into a vivid mosaic, which is the epic drama of the American railroads." (Dispatcher reads the Sunday book-review supplements.) And yard-master says he's never before seen so many facts piled up so high in any one book—and facts, he adds with a great show of sense, "is what everybody wants."

Well, the facts are here, all right; and you may agree with yard-master, for all I know, and be grateful for all these 451 pages of fact, fact, fact . . . For my part, I think that Holbrook has given us a good picture of the whole subject. But I confess, too, that it's too crowded with detail for my especial liking. I confess I'm interested in details only when they serve as data to reveal or confirm, or to illustrate or concretely dramatize, some fundamental truth. Details that aren't needed for this purpose become excessive and annoying; become even suffocating. I don't say that Holbrook's book is as bad as all that. I mean only to suggest that his pile-up of facts, of sheer data, stands in the way of his telling the story as swiftly as he might have told it. I believe, in short, that he might have written a better book if he had done the job in half as many words.

But I still say it's a good book; of its kind, it's one of the best. And along with the rounders and the highballers, and the B.R.T.s and the O.R.C.s, I'm happy to second the good wishes of Dispatcher at JC, who hopes this book may reach her terminal high on the best-seller list; who wishes her a clear track, with semaphores all clutching at the sky, and a nice hot boiler all the way there.

DAVID MARSHALL.

The Marines' War. Fletcher Pratt. Sloane. \$5.00.

PROBABLY the most dramatic record of the war is that of the Marine Corps. It is also the bloodiest. Fletcher Pratt has written a book that is important as a military record, but more important as a striking picture of just what made the Marine campaigns so brutal and so brilliant; what made this Pacific war so strange and overwhelming in its combination of oceanic sweep, and bitter, exhausting, foot-by-foot combat.

He writes colorfully, though a bit repetitiously and at times disjointedly. Withal, he gives a story that is as documented and as thoroughly annotated as the most literal-minded historian could want, without sacrificing the essential forcefulness that would be necessary in any history of the United States Marines. He does not hesitate to call sharp attention to the mistakes, and the ironic twists in the conduct of the war. He takes both the parent Navy and the occasionally foster-parent Army to task from time to time. (MacArthur, for example, doesn't come off too well in the rather brief treatment he is accorded in connection with his command over Marines.)

But it is, naturally, the Marines themselves which receive the full panoramic treatment they deserve, and they emerge at the end of the book as the long-suffering and all-triumphant atom bomb in the flesh that they really were—the instrument that broke the Japanese backs so thoroughly that anything, at the moment of the Japanese surrender, would have been seized upon by the enemy as a heaven-sent opportunity to give up and yet save face. The book is certainly the final over-all word

on the Marines in World War II, and seemingly could well be adopted by the corps as its official history. All their glory is in these pages, and all their sacrifice, their humanity, their humor, their grimness, and even their errors.

It will seem surprising to some that Pratt considers Peleliu the toughest nut of all the ones the Marines cracked. But it *was*, partially because it was expected, especially after an earth-shaking naval and air bombardment, to be easy. Some of the other great Marine battles—the grinding Guadalcanal campaign, the blasting assault on Tarawa, the tortuous Iwo Jima attack, and the extended beginning of the end on Okinawa—were fantastically grim. But Peleliu was, minute for minute, the most bitter. And as it turned out it wasn't really necessary to take Peleliu after all, though no one could know that beforehand. Another point is worth special note: the constant reports of heavy Jap casualties to our comparatively light ones were rarely exaggerated. We did actually eliminate thousands of them to our hundreds—and we did so because the Marines, rapidly at times but always surely and steadily, acquired the “savvy” of amphibious and jungle warfare, and became history's most specialized, effective and spectacular assault troops.

T. E. CASSIDY.

I Sing of a Maiden. Sister M. Thérèse. Macmillan. \$4.50.

DEVOTION to the Mother of God was bound, sooner or later, to inspire someone to gather all the great poems in her honor into a complete anthology. That is what Sister Thérèse has done, and done beautifully in this anthology which is definitive up to this day. “I Sing of a Maiden” is one of those big handsome books you want to have where you can reach out for it and return to its delights over and over again. And it is also a book which is rich in suggestions about poetry and about the love of Our Lady.

For one thing, the mere index of the thing is tremendous: it can even claim an unexpected place among the poems of the volume, and is not the worst of them either, by any means. Look at the names: David and Saint John the Evangelist; Dante, Jacopone, Cynewulf, Donne, Rilke; Saint Bonaventure and Péguy; Adam of St. Victor and Fr. Hopkins; Gil Vicente and T. S. Eliot; Saint John of the Cross, Sedulius, the liturgies of Rome and Greece and Ethiopia; and then the contrasts and surprises: Crashaw and Poe, Goethe and Claudel, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Dorothy Parker.

Sister Thérèse seems to have done her best to include everybody, and this, in fact, tends to shadow the latter half of the book with disappointment. After the great names of the Middle Ages, decently scattered with representative selections from each, there is a much fuller representation of the less great names of our own age and nation. The result is a lack of balance that divides the book into what one necessarily must regard as two anthologies of varying quality and scope. And at the same time, there is a gap in the contemporary section that shouts for attention: Robert Lowell, the American Catholic poet who comes closest to being anything like great in our day, has been left out.

The contrast between these two divisions points to an interesting remark about our modern verse in praise of Mary: it is this. After page 149 (on which, with Saint

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Alphonsus, we take leave of the classics) the title "I Sing of a Maiden" ceases to have such aptness. The truth is, too many of the poets since then sang not of the Maiden but of themselves. True, Our Lady provided them with a theme, but it is too often only a hook on which to hang their own portrait or, worse still, their own case-history. Even when the tone is not completely subjective, the poets' straining for sensuous vividness too often betrays their concern with the satisfaction of their own emotions before everything else.

In the picture of contemporary Catholic poetry which this book gives us, we see the embers of romanticism getting grayer and grayer, and little is left but the glib, competent trifles of decent and wistful souls being bravely gay in a world that they recognize to be wicked without being able to do anything about it. And one begins to wonder if the great amount of "Mary-poetry" written in our time is to be ascribed to faith or merely to the fact that there exist so many small colleges where English teachers find a moment here and there to write down an imitation of the models they have been displaying to the young. And if all that sounds a trifle nasty it is meant to include the author of this review who finds himself taking up more space in the volume than Sedulius!

THOMAS MERTON.

Old China Hands and the Foreign Office. Nathan A. Pelcovits. King's Crown Press. \$3.75.

MR. PELCOVITS's *Old China Hands* would have been better used as a doctoral thesis than as a standard publication. It covers, in a most exacting manner, the conflict between British merchants in China and their government over British policy towards China in the years 1860-1900. In spite of his rather dusty material Mr. Pelcovits writes interestingly. But the subject is too limited and the approach too minute to make "Old China Hands" of interest to more than a small audience.

Family Farm Policy. Edited by Joseph Ackerman and Marshall Harris. Chicago. \$4.00.

THESE proceedings of an international conference on family farm policy held at the University of Chicago two years ago add up to an impressive aggregate of detailed information. Of greater interest for most readers than the "Interpretive Summary" which introduces the volume are the sections devoted to agricultural conditions in the lands of the respective delegates. In Canada, for instance, the family farm is dominant; and there that term includes the greatest variations in size. In Britain a landlord-tenant system is preferred, providing there is reasonable security of tenure, and there is considerable debate about transferring to the state title to all farm land. In New Zealand "leases predominate in districts where there is a large proportion of poor land, freeholds where there is a large proportion of good land." The great farm problem in the Netherlands is that more than 60 percent of the farmers have less than 25 acres. In Latin-America the big problem derives from the colonial economic and social setup; a great majority of the rural inhabitants are under-nourished and without security and the peon-patron relationship fails to develop an adequate sense of employer responsibility. These are a few examples of data which are heavily documented.